



The Garrison Safety Office **Offers Back-to-School 2006 Safety Tips** **for the**

Darmstadt, Heidelberg, Kaiserslautern and Mannheim **Communities**

Back To School Safety By John Beatty

I'm wondering where the summer went, how about you? It seems that whenever I wanted to do anything-it rained. Because of the rain my grass is greener but also taller and I spent a great deal of time trying to keep it under control. I'm losing the battle. Just like me you are all wondering where the time has gone. In just a few weeks school will be starting up again. For those of us that are parents, it's back to school shopping, getting the kids ready for a new sleep schedule and listening to "but I don't want to go back to school". But for all of us, whether or not we have children that are returning to school, it's time to think about back to school safety.

Use this checklist to prepare your children for a safe school year.

- ✚ Make sure your child knows his or her telephone number and address as well as 112 for an emergency.
- ✚ Plan a walking route to the bus stop with your child. Choose the most direct route, test it with them and tell them not to talk to strangers of any sort.
- ✚ Teach children when walking, biking, or riding a bus to school to obey all traffic signals, signs, and safety patrol rules.
- ✚ Make sure that they walk to school with others; a friend, brother or sister.
- ✚ When car-pooling, drop off and pick up as close to school as possible.
- ✚ Teach your child never to talk to strangers or accept rides or gifts from strangers or others without your permission. If you have someone new pick them up before you have had a chance to tell them, you might want to give your child a secret password that only someone you sent would know. If the person doesn't know the password, your child will know not to go with them.

When your child is home alone for a few hours after school.

- ✚ Set rules for locking doors and windows, answering the door or phone.
- ✚ Make sure they check in with you or a neighbor immediately after school.
- ✚ Agree on rules for inviting friends over and for going to a friend's home when no adult is present.

Take time to listen carefully to your children's fears, and feelings about people or places that scare them or make them feel uneasy. Tell them to trust their instincts. Take complaints about bullies and other concerns seriously. Remember it's another new school year and although you might think that your children should know these rules, please refresh their memory.

Source: <http://maineburnsurvivors.org/BacktoSchool.htm>

Vehicle Safety

Riding in Cars:

When car-pooling, drop off and pick up children as close to school as possible. Don't leave until they have entered the schoolyard or building.

Buckle up properly: Older children in seatbelts, younger children in booster seats with seatbelts, and small children in car seats.

Riding the Bus:

School bus transportation is safe. In fact, buses are safer than cars! Even so, in the U.S. last year, approximately 26 students were killed and another 9,000 were injured in incidents involving school buses. More often than not, these deaths and injuries didn't occur in a crash, but as the pupils were entering and exiting the bus.

Remember these safety tips:

Have a safe place to wait for your bus, away from traffic and the street.

Stay away from the bus until it comes to a complete stop and the driver signals you to enter.

Keep a safe distance between you and the bus. Also, remember that the bus driver can see you best when you are back away from the bus.

Use the handrail to enter and exit the bus.

Stay away from the bus until the driver gives his/her signal that it's okay to approach.

Be aware of the street traffic around you. Drivers **are** required to follow certain rules of the road concerning school buses, however, not all do. Protect yourself and watch out!

Source: http://www.co.walworth.wi.us/Sheriff/Website/prev_safety_tips

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Reminds Parents to Keep Safety in Mind When Sending Children Back To School

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The summer is quickly coming to an end and parents and children nationwide are preparing for another school year. The U.S. CPSC is reminding parents to take precautions to keep children safe when they head back to school. "As you prepare to send your child back to school, parents should arm themselves with important safety tips that can help keep your child in the classroom and out of a hospital emergency room," said CPSC Acting Chairman Nancy Nord.

Drawstrings on Children's Clothing

One hazard to watch for is drawstrings on children's clothing. This hidden hazard can lead to deaths and injuries because drawstrings can catch on such items as playground equipment. Over the past 20 years, CPSC received reports of 23 deaths and 64 non-fatal incidents involving the entanglement of children's clothing drawstrings.

CPSC recommends that parents or caregivers only buy upper outerwear without hood and neck drawstrings. If you find children's clothing with drawstrings in your home, completely remove the hood and neck drawstrings from all children's upper outerwear, including jackets and sweatshirts, size 2T through size 12.

Wear the Right Helmet

Rather than ride the bus, many children ride bikes, scooters and skateboards to school. To reduce the risk of serious head injury or death, children should wear a helmet - and it is important to wear the appropriate helmet for your sport.

About 800 people, approximately 180 children, died in bicycle-related incidents in a recent year. More than half of the 500,000 bicycle-related emergency room-treated injuries in 2005 involved children under the age of 15. Wearing a helmet can reduce the risk of a head injury by up to 85 percent.

Look for a label inside the bicycle helmet indicating it meets the CPSC standard. Other sport helmets, including those for skateboarders and football players, have labeling certifying compliance with other standards.

CPSC has a new publication entitled "Which Helmet for Which Activity." This brochure is a useful guide to parents and includes helmet information on sports kids play at every age level.

Be aware of local laws pertaining to the use of pocket bikes and scooters, and do not ride on streets or in driveways. Many cities and communities have specific areas where scooters are permissible. Other communities prohibit entirely the riding of pocket bikes or motorized scooters.

Please note that pocket bikes (pocket rockets) are not street legal in Germany or anywhere on Post.

Art Supplies: CPSC has recalled a variety of art materials over the years due to sharp tools; accessible lead in crayons, chalk and paint; and other hazards.

Only buy art materials that contain the statement, "CONFORMS TO ASTM D-4236."

To view the complete release online, please go to the CPSC web site at:

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml06/06229.html>

In the Classroom

Talk to your children about their day. Sometimes children won't tell you right away if they are having problems at school. Ask your children if they see anyone bullied, if they are bullied, or if there is anything else that makes them feel uncomfortable. Look for warning signs, such as, attitude, a sudden drop in grades, loss of friends, or torn clothing.

Teach children to resolve problems without fighting. Explain that fighting could lead to injuries, hurting someone else, or earning a reputation as a bully. Talk to them about other ways they can work out problems, such as talking it out, walking away, sticking with friends, or telling a trusted adult.

Keep an eye on your children's Internet use. Many elementary schools have computers with Internet access. Ask your children's school if students are monitored when they use the Internet or if there is a blocking device installed to prevent children from finding explicit websites. Talk to your children about what they do online – what sites they visit, who they email, and who they chat with. Let them know they can talk to you if anything they see online makes them uncomfortable, whether it's an explicit website or a classmate bullying them or someone else through email, chat, or websites.

Source: <http://www.mcgruff.org/Grownups/bts.htm>

Ergonomic Backpacks: The Smart Way to Go

From [Donna L. Montaldo](#),

Backpacks are a great way to keep all the books, notebooks and school supplies together and kids love to pick out "cool" designs that exhibit their individual tastes. But a recent study completed by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) reported that when a backpack one that is too heavy or improperly worn doesn't make the mark and places stress on the back and neck.

The APTA reported the findings of a survey performed by professor Shelly Goodgold, of Simmons College in Boston, which showed that 55 percent of the children in the survey carried loaded down backpacks that were heavier than 15 percent of their body weight. According to safety guidelines reported by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the maximum that a child should carry in their backpack should not exceed 10 to 20 percent of their body weight.

Back and Neck Strains and Pain

How a child carries their backpack is also important to avoid strains and possible back injury. Keeping the weight positioned so that it is balanced is important. Many kids tend to sling their backpacks over one shoulder instead of utilizing the back straps.

"When you carry something that is really heavy, your head goes forward and you lean forward," said Goodgold to the APTA, "This can produce strains in the neck, and strains in the back. Holding it over one shoulder can also create imbalances."



As parents become more aware of this problem, they are seeking out packs that are better structurally and ergonomically designed, even though the expense may be greater. The problem is getting the kids to actually use the "smart" backpacks since they often lack in desired "coolness."

Hopefully more companies will see the necessity of designing safer, smarter, and cooler backpacks to help address this growing concern among parents and professionals.

Tips on How to Safely Wear a Backpack

Use both shoulder straps and pack belts. Using just one strap causes an imbalance of weight and adds stress to one side of the body. It also forces the wearer to adjust their posture in an uneven manner. By wearing both straps and belts, the weight is distributed and proper posture is promoted.

Place the backpack over the mid-back muscles. Adjust the shoulder straps so that the pack is properly placed on the mid-section of the back. Loose straps will allow the pack to slip so insure that they are tight enough to stay in place. The straps should be placed so that the child has free movement of their arms and do not have to struggle to remove the pack. Avoid getting a pack that is too large for a child.

Weigh the pack to insure it isn't overloaded. Placing it on a scale will allow you to determine if it is meeting the weight recommendations of not exceeding 10 to 20 percent of their body weight.

Pack only what is needed for that day. Children have a way of turning their backpack into a closet by putting everything they like inside but not necessarily everything they need. Remove the contents on a regular basis and remove the items that are not necessary. Take the time to show your child how to repack the items in compartments and not just dumping it into the main pouch.

Tips for Buying Safely Designed Packs

- Padded backs to help reduce pressure on shoulders, arms and back.
- Belts for the hip and chest to aide in proper weight distribution.
- Multiple compartments so that items can be placed in the pack with better balance and distribution plus keeping them secure and easy to access.
- Stabilizing compression straps on the sides and bottom to help secure and compress the contents.
- Reflective patches to increase pre-dawn or night safety.

Wheeled Backpacks

If you decide on a wheeled back pack, it is important that the handle extends long enough so that the child does not have to bend and twist to use it. The wheels should be large enough to keep the pack balanced when pulling it. It is not unusual to see a child walking down the street, turned slightly to the side, dragging a toppled rolling back pack behind them. Also, consider how often a child will need to take it up and down steps or lift it in and out of cars. Before making a purchase of a rolling back pack, ask the store if you can try it out, and load it up and see how it performs.

Warning Signs of an Over-loaded Backpack

- Twisting, turning or struggling when putting on or removing the backpack
- Posture changing when wearing, such as leaning forward, or leaning to one side.
- Complaints of pain or discomfort from the child.
- Tingling, red marks, numbness.
- If you see the child dragging the pack along the ground instead of wearing it.

**WATCH YOUR
"SPEED"
IN SCHOOL ZONES!**